

## **There They Go Again on Higher Taxes and Bigger Government**

By Assembly Republican Leader Mike Villines

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During a debate with Jimmy Carter, after listening to him repeat the same campaign rhetoric and empty promises several times over, Ronald Reagan had had enough, famously turning to the incumbent and saying, “There you go again!”

After listening to Democrats in the Assembly and Senate talk about their solutions to California’s health care challenges, I feel just like Ronald Reagan, tempted to turn to the Democrat leaders and say, “There you go again!”

The prescription from Sacramento big-spenders is always the same – higher taxes and massive government programs taxpayers cannot afford. This year’s debate on health care reform is no exception, with the majority party proposing the largest tax increase on businesses in California history – a whopping \$6.6 billion jobs tax – to fund their health care plan.

Imposing a 7.5 percent tax on their employees won’t give businesses affordable health care choices, nor will it stop the rising costs and expensive premiums that make it impossible for many to cover their workers. When faced with the prospect of paying for mandates and tax increases, businesses will be forced to make a terrible choice – raise prices, lay off workers or close their doors. Nobody wins in this situation.

Not only will the Democrat jobs tax plan hurt every business in California, it will hit hard working Californians where it hurts the most, in their pocketbooks. You need not look any further than BJ’s Kountry Kitchen in Fresno to see the real impact the Democrat jobs tax plan will have. Gary Honeycutt owns four BJ’s Kountry Kitchen’s in our area and employs 60 people. If he is forced to pay a 7.5% jobs tax, he would have to close at least one of his restaurants, causing 16 people to lose their jobs.

It is unconscionable to think that 16 of our friends and neighbors will lose their jobs as a result of these misguided proposals. Keep in mind, that’s only one restaurant. Statewide, the impact of a new jobs tax on small businesses and restaurants throughout California could be the loss of more than 70,000 jobs.

But the jobs tax scheme is really just the first step in their health care agenda. Their ultimate goal is to create a massive, government-run health care system that would make the leaders of the former Soviet Union proud.

Putting the government in charge of health care will do nothing to improve the quality of medical care and may make matters even worse. The experiences in other countries that have adopted government-run health care show us what we have in store here in California – higher costs, long waits, bloated bureaucracy and rationed care. Socialized medicine hasn’t worked in other countries, and it won’t work for California.

Republicans will not sit idly by and watch our health care system turn into a government-run mess. That's why we have introduced 18 reforms to maximize choice, reduce costs and increase access to quality medical care – without tax increases or new government programs. You should be empowered to choose the plan that fits your health needs and your family's budget, not stuck with a one-size-fits-all, government plan.

Unfortunately, Assembly Democrats believe big government knows best, and have killed nearly all of our health care reform bills with little debate. I'm disappointed they rejected the opportunity to work with Republicans to craft bipartisan, market-based reforms that will improve access and choice, while reducing costs. Common-sense reforms such as health savings accounts, expanding community-based health clinics and expanding tax deductions for out-of-pocket medical expenses were all voted down.

It's time Democrats actually heard from the people who would be hurt the most by their disastrous proposals – the taxpayers and businesses that will be stuck paying the bills for their government health care schemes. Will you help? Will you get involved?

Californians cannot afford to sit back while liberal spending destroys health care in our state. I hope you will join me in fighting hard to stop the jobs tax and government health care scheme before it threatens jobs, destroys innovation, hurts hard working Californians and devastates our economy.

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